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MARCH MEETING.

A stated meeting was held on Thursday, 12th March, 1874, at 11 o'clock A.M.; the President in the chair.

The records of the last monthly meeting and of the Social Meeting were read.

The Librarian read his monthly report of donors to the Library.

Messrs. Saltonstall, Waterston, and Smith were appointed a committee to nominate a list of officers at the Annual Meeting in April.

Messrs. Lawrence, Mason, and W. Amory were appointed a committee to examine the Treasurer's annual account.

A letter from Mr. F. O. Vaille and Mr. H. A. Clark was read, asking permission to take a photograph copy of a picture of Harvard College buildings in the Society's Cabinet. Mr. Sibley indorsed the application, which was granted.

The President read the following Memoir of our late Resident Member, William Minot, which he was requested to prepare for the Society's Proceedings:—

On the 28th of May, 1802, our late illustrious associate, John Quincy Adams, in a public Address, spoke of his friend the Honorable George Richards Minot, then recently dead, as follows: "The community to which such a man as this belongs, confer honor upon themselves by every token of distinction they bestow upon him. Mr. Minot was successively employed in various offices of trust and of honor. To vice, a merciful but inflexible judge; to misfortune, a compassionate friend; to the widow, a protector of her rights; to the orphan, one in place of a father; in every station which the voice of his country called him alternately to fill, he displayed that individual endowment of the mind, and that peculiar virtue of the heart, which was most essential to the useful exercise of its functions."

On the 12th of June, 1873, our honored Vice-President, Charles Francis Adams, at a meeting of our Society, said of the Honorable William Minot, then recently dead, as follows: "It becomes my duty to note the decease, since the last meeting, of one of our most venerable and respected members. Though never taking any prominent part in the public action of life, no person passed his days in the performance of duties more useful to society or honorable to himself. Confidence in the fulfilment of obligations of pecuniary trusts is only merited by

a life of the purest integrity. The many who reposed it in him, during the long course of his active career, had cause to congratulate themselves, when reflecting how much shifting sand was visible always around them, that they had built their house on a rock."

It is a rare thing for a father and son to be the subjects successively of such enviable tributes, from sources so distinguished. It is not less rare for another father and son, at an interval of more than seventy years, to be the privileged authors of such tributes. The double coincidence may well be noted.

Of the Honorable George Richards Minot, one of the original members of our Society, and who made such early and substantial contributions to the work in which we are engaged, — by his *History of Shays's Rebellion*, and his continuation of *Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts*, — a Memoir will be found in the Eighth Volume of our Collections. It was undoubtedly prepared by his pastor, the Rev. James Freeman, D.D., then the Recording Secretary of the Society; who, however, marked the Memoir as his own only by affixing R. S., in small type, to the last printed page. To that Memoir, made up in large part from a Eulogy previously delivered by himself in King's Chapel, nothing needs be added, as it sets forth fully the life, character, and services of its subject, at a moment when they were fresh in the affectionate memory of the writer and of the community.

The Honorable William Minot was born in the homestead of his father and grandfather, in what is now known as Devonshire Street, Boston, opposite the New Post Office, on the 17th of September, 1783; and he took his Bachelor's Degree at Harvard University, with the distinguished Class of 1802, a few months after his father's death. He was admitted to the Bar of Suffolk County in 1805, and entered at once on the professional pursuits in which his father had been so eminent. To those pursuits he perseveringly adhered; only abandoning them when compelled to do so by the infirmities of old age. He was particularly devoted to the Law of Wills and Trusts. A man of the purest life, of the highest principles, of the most scrupulous and transparent integrity, — his counsel was eagerly sought, during a long term of years, by those who had estates to bequeath, or trusts to be arranged and executed; and no one enjoyed a greater share than he did, in these and in all other relations, of the esteem and confidence of the community in which he lived.

Among other Funds committed to his care, was that be-

queathed to the town of his birth by Benjamin Franklin, with a primary view of encouraging young and meritorious mechanics. This Fund was placed in Mr. Minot's hands by the authorities of Boston in 1804, and was gratuitously administered by him for the long period of sixty-four years, when it had increased from four thousand to one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. The City Government did not fail to enter upon its records a grateful acknowledgment of the eminent prudence and probity with which the Fund had been managed.

Naturally of a retiring disposition, Mr. Minot never sought public office, and very rarely yielded to the solicitation of friends by accepting it. He served his native place for a year or two, when it was first incorporated as a City, as the presiding officer of one of its wards; and he served the Commonwealth, for another year or two, with fidelity and honor, as a member of the Executive Council, during the administration of Governor Everett. He rendered valuable services, also, to the community, for a considerable time, as an Inspector of Prisons. But his tastes were for professional and domestic life, and he resolutely declined all further public employment.

No one could be more charming in the family or social circle, which often included Sedgwick and Saltonstall, and Lees and the Deweys, and Mrs. Fanny Kemble, and others of similar gifts. His noble countenance and genial manner attracted the regard and admiration of all who were admitted to his friendship, while his Christian faith and principle gave the crowning grace to his life and character.

He was of an ancient family, which has been traced back to Thomas Minot, the Secretary to the Abbot of Saffron Walden, in Essex County, England, in the reign of Henry VIII., whose coat-of-arms was surmounted by a Cross, with the motto "*Ad astra per aspera.*" The family name, indeed, finds a distinguished wearer, still further back, — in the reign of Edward III., — in the person of Laurence Minot, whose Poems, written about 1352, — earlier even than those of Chaucer, — were printed in London in 1795. A copy of the little volume has recently been added to our library.

Mr. Minot was elected a member of this Society in 1843, and had thus been associated with us for thirty years, — his name standing, at the time of his death, sixth, in the order of seniority of membership, on our Resident Roll. He took a warm interest in our prosperity, and delighted to remember that his father had been one of our founders. To his thoughtful consideration for our welfare, — as I have the best reason to

know, — we have owed more than one of the substantial contributions to our funds, which have helped to relieve our treasury within the past few years.

He was a great reader during the later period of his long life. Few men were more familiar with the sterling productions of English literature, and he was always eager to converse, with the friends who visited him in his old age, on the books of history or philosophy, of romance or poetry, which were seldom out of his hands. Rarely, however, could he be induced to prepare any thing for the press. He communicated to the "Polyanthos," a periodical now forgotten, in 1806, a graceful sketch of his father's life and character, which has lately been privately reprinted in a separate form, and a copy of it added to our collection of pamphlets. A single other production completes the list of his published writings. At the request of our own Society, he prepared, in January, 1862, a Memoir of his distinguished classmate and life-long friend, the Hon. Samuel Hoar, which is among our printed papers. It is brief, simple, just to its subject, and eminently characteristic of its author. He was impatient of the long, and often extravagant, posthumous tributes which have become customary of late years; and it would be an offence to his own memory to extend this notice by further details of his excellent, but quiet and uneventful life.

He died, — in the house in Beacon Street, which he had occupied for sixty years, — in the ninetieth year of his age, on the 2d of June, 1873. His old family tomb, in the "Granary Burying Ground," — in which the remains of General Joseph Warren had reposed for many years after they were identified at Bunker Hill, — having been vacated and surrendered by him to the City, he was buried in "Forest-Hills Cemetery," where the dust of those dear to him had already been gathered, and not far from his pleasant summer residence at Jamaica Plain.

Mr. Minot was married, in 1809, to a daughter of a former well-remembered Solicitor-General of Massachusetts, Daniel Davis, the father, also, of the present Admiral Charles H. Davis. She was a lady of rare accomplishments, whose death in 1858 was felt as a bereavement far beyond the large domestic circle of which she was an ornament. Two daughters and three sons survived him; and to one of the latter, bearing his name and engaged in the same professional pursuits, we are already indebted for an excellent account of his father's life and character, privately and anonymously printed, which has left little to be added by any one else, and which has given a warmth and a truth of delineation and color to the portrait

it presents which could only be supplied by a loving filial hand.

It is enough for others to bear witness to its fidelity.

The President presented to the Society, in the name of Mr. William Minot, the son of our late associate, two pamphlets, and a volume of Poems of Lawrence Minot, who lived in the fourteenth century.

The President now announced the decease of the Honorable Millard Fillmore, an Honorary Member, and of the Honorable Charles Sumner, a Resident Member, in the following language : —

The grave closes to-day, Gentlemen, over one of our most distinguished Honorary Members, who, having held the office of President of the United States, has been recognized at the capital and throughout the country as the fit subject of national funeral honors. It is, however, by no means only to the exalted position which Mr. Fillmore was privileged to occupy more than twenty years ago, that his name will owe the respectful remembrance and grateful regard of his fellow-citizens. His political career was, indeed, an elevated and a proud one. As a member of the legislature of New York, and for a time the comptroller of its finances ; as a member of the House of Representatives of the United States, and for a time its chairman of the committee of ways and means ; as the elected Vice-President, and, for more than two years, owing to the lamented death of General Taylor, the President of our Republic, and this during a period of great sectional agitation and disturbance, — in all these relations he has made a mark in the history of the country which cannot easily be erased or overlooked.

It certainly will not be forgotten by us of Massachusetts, that Daniel Webster and Edward Everett were successively his Secretaries of State, and that he enjoyed the confidence, the respect, and the warm regard and friendship of them both. Indeed, his whole cabinet council, during the period of his presidency, including as it did the names of Webster and Everett, of Crittenden and Corwin, of Graham and Kennedy, of Stuart and Conrad and Nathan K. Hall, — but few of whom are now left among the living, and the last of whom, so long the law partner of the ex-President, by a striking coincidence has preceded him to the grave by only two or three days, — that whole Cabinet, I repeat, presents a group, which will be recognized even by those who differed most widely from its policy, as reflecting lustre on him who had so surrounded himself. I may be

allowed to remember that I was myself, for several years, associated with him in Congress, and was thus a daily witness to his devoted labors, his scrupulous integrity, and his great practical ability as a debater and a statesman.

But the official career of Mr. Fillmore, long and distinguished as it was, served only to give public exhibition of the sterling qualities of a just and true man. He may have made mistakes like other men; he may have disappointed hopes like other men; he may have subjected himself to suspicion or reproach, from partisan opponents, or even from partisan friends. But no one who was ever brought into any degree of personal intimacy with him could fail to recognize and appreciate the strong elements of his character; his amiability, his moderation, his modesty, his firmness, his sturdy common sense, his inflexible principle, the purity of his life, and his many Christian virtues.

"That worthy Mr. Fillmore," — as I well remember, — was the habitual expression of Irving, after a casual residence at the capital, in the prosecution of researches for his *Life of Washington*, had brought our charming author into familiar acquaintance with the then occupant of the executive mansion. "That worthy Mr. Fillmore" has fallen from a thousand lips before and since, and might well be taken as the brief, but just and comprehensive, inscription for his tombstone.

Without the advantages of earlier or later education, a stranger to colleges, and almost a stranger to schools in his youth, he fulfilled, as few other men so remarkably have done, the true idea of a self-made, self-educated man, and became a sound lawyer and an eminent statesman by the mere force of his own native energy and manly perseverance. No vain ambition, no miserable office-seeking, no reckless resolve to lift himself by any and all means into popular notice and notoriety, no degrading design to live and fatten upon the perquisites of public station, ever entered into the processes of his preferment. Always ready to serve his State or his Country, when he was clearly called to do so, he knew how to retire with dignity and self-respect when the voice of the people was no longer in his favor. He knew, too, how to employ his retirement in ways worthy of a good citizen and a Christian gentleman, and worthy of the distinction and influence which attached to him as an ex-President of the United States. He was particularly interested in the local history of Western New York, and was one of the founders and the first president of the Historical Society of Buffalo.

Mr. Fillmore was born on the 7th of January, 1800, and died on the 8th of March, 1874, having thus entered on the 74th year of his age.

Gentlemen, the ink with which I had penned the brief tribute which I have just paid to my friend, President Fillmore, was hardly dry, when the telegraph wires from Washington were trembling with the tidings of a death which makes a breach in our own immediate little circle of a hundred; but a far wider breach in the larger sphere of the national councils. The death of the Hon. Charles Sumner, which occurred yesterday afternoon, but of which I only heard the certainty this morning, is an event too sudden and too impressive to be the subject of any off-hand utterances. Yet, assembled here as we are to-day, with so striking an event uppermost in all our thoughts, it cannot be passed over in silence, — certainly not by me. To us, as a society, Mr. Sumner was, indeed, but little; his name having been added to our resident roll only within a few months past, and it never having been convenient to him to be present at even one of our meetings. We had all sincerely hoped, however, that in some future interval between the sessions of Congress, in some breathing-time from his arduous and assiduous public labors, we might have enjoyed the benefit of his large acquaintance with historical subjects, and of the rich accomplishments by which he was distinguished. That hope is now suddenly brought to an end, and we have only the satisfaction of knowing that his election, as one of our restricted number, afforded him a moment's gratification, in what have so unexpectedly proved to be the last few months of his life.

In the Senate of the United States, of which for more than three terms he has been so prominent and conspicuous a member, the gap created by his death cannot easily be measured. There, for so many years, he has been one of the observed of all observers. There, for so many years, scarce a word or an act of his has failed to be the subject of wide-spread attention and comment. No name has been oftener in the columns of the daily press, or on the lips of the people in all parts of the country, — sometimes for criticism, and even for censure, but far more generally for commendation and applause. Such a name, certainly, cannot pass from the rolls of living men, without leaving a large void to many eyes and to many hearts.

One of the pioneers in the cause of anti-slavery, while yet in private life, he breasted the billows of that raging controversy with unsparing energy, until the struggle ceased with the institution which had given rise to it. The same untiring energy was then transferred to what he regarded as the rights of the race which had been emancipated. Indeed, every thing which could be associated with the idea of human rights was made the subject of his ardent advocacy, according to his own judgment and

convictions. Devoting himself early, also, to the cause of Peace, and making the relations of the United States with other nations a matter for special study, — his unwearied labors as Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs for several years, and his acknowledged familiarity with international law, can never be undervalued or forgotten.

As a writer, a lecturer, a debater, and an orator, he had acquired the strongest hold on public attention everywhere, both at home and abroad; and few scholars have brought to the illustration of their topics, whether political or literary, the fruits of greater research. His orations and speeches, of which a new edition, revised by his own hand, is understood to be approaching a completion, cannot fail to be a rich store-house of classical and historical lore, and will certainly furnish a most valuable series of pictures, from his own point of view, of the stirring scenes to which they relate.

I dare not attempt, gentlemen, to dwell at greater length on the crowded and eventful public career of Mr. Sumner. The tidings of his death have come upon us all with too painful a surprise to allow of our dealing with the subject as we might desire to do. And for myself, I need hardly say here, that any detailed discussion of his course might involve peculiar elements of delicacy and difficulty; as it has been my fortune, or, as others may think, my misfortune, to differ from him so often and so widely; sometimes as to conclusions and ends, but far more frequently as to the means of reaching those conclusions, and of advancing those ends.

I am glad to remember, however, that every thing of personal alienation and estrangement had long ago ceased between us, and that no one has been more ready than myself, for many years past, to welcome him into this Association. His praises will be abundantly, and far more fitly, spoken elsewhere, if not here, by the countless friends to whom he was so dear; and you will all pardon me, I know, if the suddenness of the announcement has prevented me from paying a more adequate tribute to his culture, his accomplishments, his virtues, and to those commanding qualities by which he impressed himself on the period in which he lived.

Born in Boston on the 6th of January, 1811, he had more than completed his 63d year.

The Honorable CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS offered the following resolution: —

Resolved, That, as members of the Massachusetts Historical Society, we learn, with profound regret, the sudden decease of our illustrious

associate, Charles Sumner, the ripe scholar, the incorruptible statesman; the eloquent advocate of a cause which his labors contributed largely to bring to a triumphant conclusion, the abolition of Negro slavery in the United States; the firm philanthropist, proved by more than twenty years of trial in and out of public life; and the ardent patriot, whose labors have ever had for their sole aim the promotion of the greatness and the maintenance of the honor of our common country.

Remarks were then made by Mr. ADAMS, Ex-Governor CLIFFORD, Judge THOMAS, Mr. WATERSTON, and Mr. EDMUND QUINCY; and the resolution was unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

A serial of the Proceedings of the Society from August to December, 1873, inclusive, was reported as ready for distribution.

ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL, 1874.

The Annual Meeting was held on Thursday, April 9th, at eleven o'clock A.M.; the President in the chair.

The Recording Secretary read the record of the preceding meeting.

The Librarian read his monthly list of donors to the Library.

The President communicated a gift from Mr. Charles P. Curtis, of Boston, of a series of lithographic copies of old maps, prepared to aid in the settlement of the boundary between the States of Virginia and Maryland, for which the thanks of the Society were ordered.

He also read a letter from Captain G. V. Fox, of Lowell, presenting to the Society a copy of the Virginia ordinance of Secession.

A pamphlet of Proceedings, embracing the doings of the meeting on the 16th of December, at the house of Mr. Waterston, was announced as printed; each member, it was added, being entitled to a copy.

An engraving illustrating the proceedings of the colonists relative to the destruction of the Tea was exhibited, having been sent from New York as a unique print.

The President called attention to some letters of John Adams, written to Professor John Winthrop, of Cambridge.*

* These were kindly sent to the Society, on deposit, by our Corresponding Member, Col. John Winthrop, and were gratefully acknowledged. — Eds